

UMA

A short classroom play based on *Samurai Kids Book 1: White Crane* (ISBN: 9780763645038)

CHARACTERS



NIYA: who has one leg



TAJI: who is blind



YOSHI: who is big and strong



MIKKO: who has one arm



KYOKO: a white-haired girl with six fingers

SENSEI KI-YAGA

SOMEONE TO STRIKE THE GONG

Gong

Sensei: More practice, Little Cockroaches. This morning we will practice horse riding.

Gong

Niya: But we can't. Uma won't let us ride him.

Sensei: That is because Uma is a great warrior horse. He thinks he is meant for better things than teaching my samurai trainees how to ride.

Mikko: He's got devil eyes.

Taji: And demon teeth.

Kyoko: How would you know? You can't see anything.

Taji: There is nothing wrong with my ears. I can hear how he crunches apples and I can imagine how he would crunch fingers.

Sensei: Uma has teaching teeth.

Mikko: Horses don't teach with their teeth.

Sensei: But they do. Especially when they bite.

Mikko: What does that teach us?

Kyoko: I know. Don't do that again!

Sensei: Yes. And riding is something all samurai warriors must learn. More practice.

Gong

Yoshi: But every time I try to climb on Uma, he tips me off.

Sensei: Uma likes the feel of a warrior's armour against his flank. He doesn't like my students' bony knees.

Yoshi: Then Niya should try riding first. He's only got one knee.

Sensei: Less talk. More practice. See, Uma is waiting patiently beneath the cherry tree.

Niya: No way. I'm not fooled by that.

Sensei: Here, Uma. I've brought you half an apple. See, Uma is very co-operative this morning.

Kyoko: Here, Uma. Would you like the other half of the apple? Yuck. He sneezed on me.

Yoshi: You're covered in horse snot.

Niya: That rotten horse did it on purpose.

Sensei: If you want to ride a horse you should not insult it first. To overcome your opponent you must find his weakness. What is Mikko's weakness?

Niya: I know. Shoulder thrust off the right foot.

Mikko: Is that how you always beat me? Well I've got a new move for next time we clash swords.

Sensei: Good answer, Niya. But what about those students who do not know Mikko so well? What would the Dragon students think?

Taji: They would think he was weak because he only has one arm.

Sensei: That's right. And they would be wrong. So you must all find Uma's weakness. Then you will ride. Now I have other things to do, Little Cockroaches. I will leave you here to finish your lesson. More practice.

Gong

- Yoshi: What is Uma's weakness?
- Niya: It's not his legs. He can run like the wind.
- Taji: It's not eyes. He can see us coming from miles away.
- Mikko: It's not his teeth. They are yellow and ugly to look at, but they're big and strong.
- Kyoko: You go first, Niya. If our knees make him grumpy your one knee will only make him half as grumpy.
- Niya: (falling off) Aaaargh
- Yoshi: Uh-oh. Uma didn't like that. I'll help you up, Niya.
- Niya: Yuk.
- Kyoko: What's wrong?
- Niya: I stuck my hand in my pocket and it's full of honey rice pudding.
- Taji: Why is your dessert in your pocket?
- Niya: I didn't have time to finish at lunch and it's my favourite so I didn't want to waste it. I stuck the bowl in my pocket.
- Kyoko: Looks like Uma is interested in your pocket too.
- Niya: That tickles.
- Yoshi: Uma likes honey rice pudding as much as you do, Niya.
- Mikko: Quick climb on now. I think Uma's teeth are smiling.
- Taji: Looks like Uma is your new best friend. He's not tipping you off this time.
- Niya: Wait till we tell Sensei we've found Uma's weakness.
- All: Honey rice pudding.

Gong